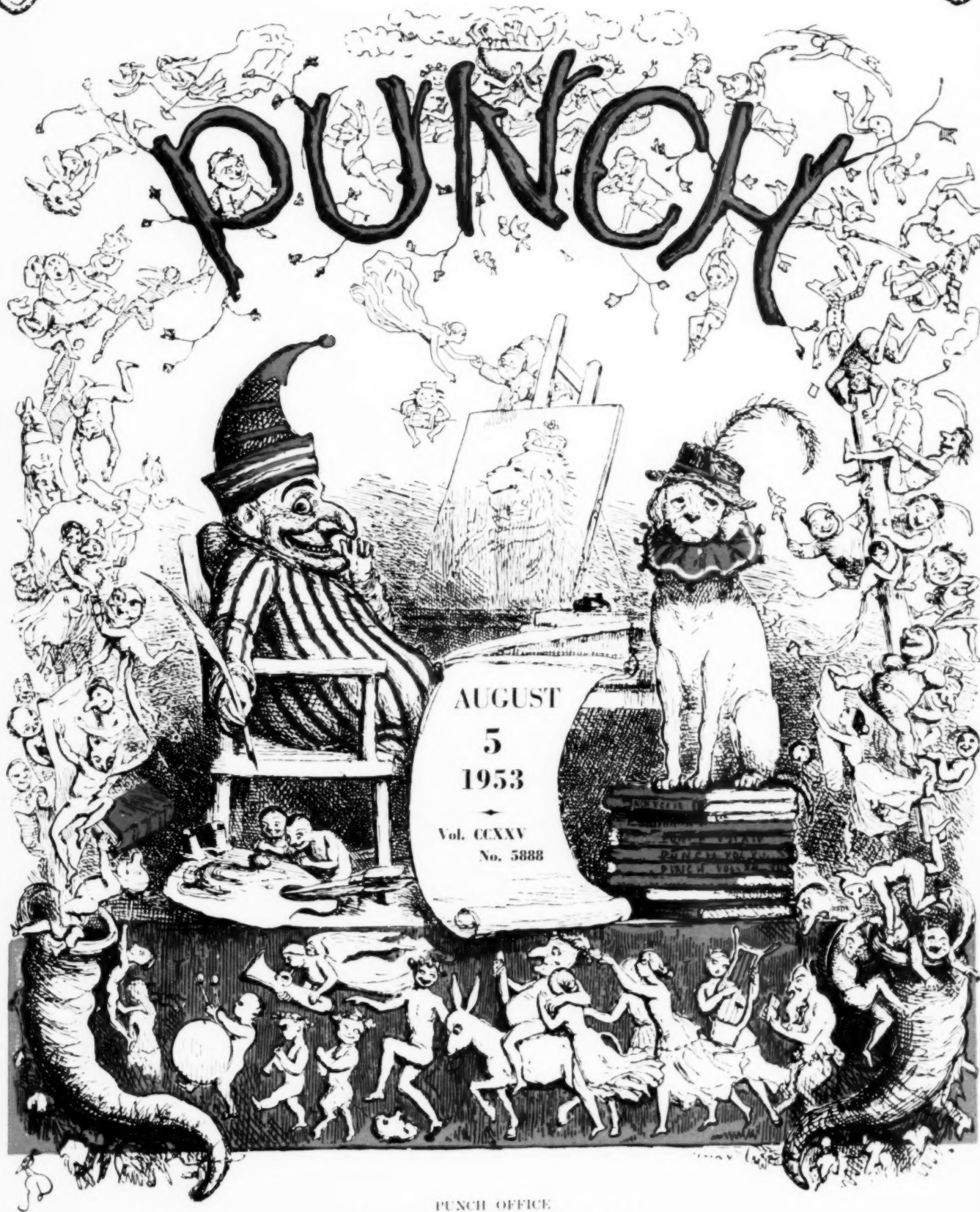


6

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P.6

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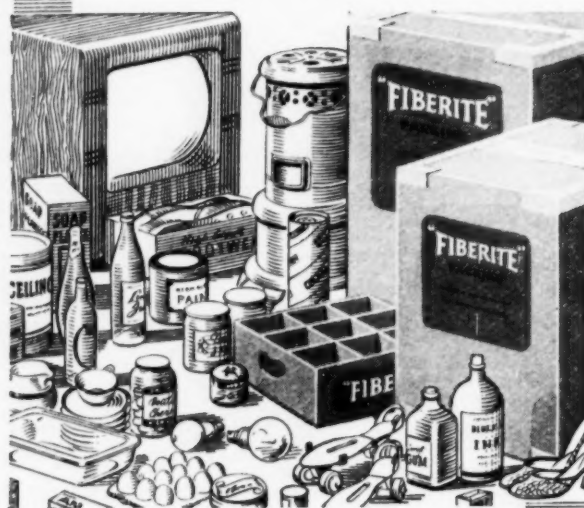
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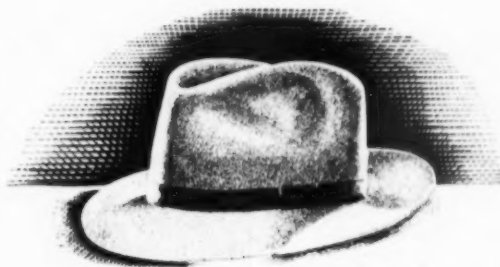


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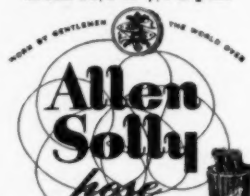


The Sheriff of Nottingham was Knitting 'em

An earlier Sheriff had been pretty well frustrated by Robin Hood but the man who was Sheriff in 1795 found fulfilment. Not only was he competent in office; he was even able to continue and expand his grandfather's business—the making of Allen Solly hose.

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CHARIVARIA

NEWS comes from America of a medical invention designed to make coughing easier for the weak-chested. By increasing air pressure in the lungs and then suddenly releasing it, says the report, the device "enables patients to cough as easily as the fittest of athletes." This standard of comparison will earn nothing but contempt from regular prom-goers.



The plight of young British poets continues to agitate the Sunday correspondence columns. What is wrong? A recent broadcast from Moscow by a young Russian poet, treating of new canals, cotton-cleaning projects, milk combines, macaroni factories, developments in the use of natural gas and

soaring production of gravel and glass suggests that our fellows may be on the wrong tack with their subject matter.

Executives of a large London firm are taking short courses in elementary typing and office routine, to see them through while their secretaries are on holiday. One man is said to be so delighted at the standard attained that he is recommending his secretary to take a course as soon as she comes back.

Applicants for a post as pigman recently advertised in the *Kent and Sussex Courier* were asked to submit, in addition to the usual details of age, experience and wages required, a photograph of themselves. Pigmen of long standing will think wistfully of the good old days, when they were quite content to be identified for visitors as the one with the hat on.

F

After many delays the French National Assembly has begun its task of revising the Constitution. One of the new articles is expected to provide for Prime Ministers to be paid on a piece-work basis.

Political campaigners in Bristol have been warned of the undesirability of calling at houses during television hours, because people resent their entertainment being interrupted by politics. Another danger, of course, is that the visitor may be dragged inside to hear a party political broadcast by the wrong party.

It is announced that Mr. Gilbert Harding is to make his reappearance on television in a series dealing with all the things he dislikes. It should run for years.

The estate of a man who lived the last thirteen years of his life at a British seaside hotel has just been proved in America at a little over £14,000,000. The feeling in the catering profession is that this particular management wasn't on its toes.

Any plea for the betterment of the dumb creature's lot must strike a response from all but the hardest heart, but it is necessary to keep some sense of proportion. An outspoken leading article in the *Sudan Star*, after describing the unfeeling treatment of donkeys in the streets of Khartoum, concludes immoderately: "Something really must be done: these animals are human too."





"WE live in a progressive age," a constituent once said to me when demanding that the County Council put on a school bus, "and progress means walking less." It is a good definition, but surely talking less is even more important than walking less. The main mark that distinguishes civilization from savagery is that man, as he progresses in civilization, tends to use increasingly the written word for the communication of his serious ideas. If that be so, many of our modern inventions are clearly leading us away from civilization and back to savagery—and not least of all the telephone.

Doctrinaire liberals may insist on the right of private citizens to telephone one another, but when we consider how large a proportion of telephone calls put through by private persons are put through solely for a purpose of commercial gain, how many others are for frivolous reasons, or, I regret to say, reasons that are even worse than frivolous, I do not think that we can feel happy if we allow this power of ringing to remain in private and unofficial hands.

As the Archbishop of Wigan so truly says, "I yield to no man in my regard for liberty. But there are some powers so dangerous that they ought not to be left in private hands. Of course, it is right that everyone, whatever his qualifications, should freely express his opinion on religion, but on matters that concern our national well-being the case is different. No one would suggest that any private, unlicensed persons should be allowed to possess poisons or explosives, nor can anyone deny that the harm that is done by talking is vastly greater than the harm that is done by poisons."

What would surely be desirable would be that all citizens should be

THE RIGHT TO RING

able to be rung, but that no citizen other than those licensed by the British Telephoning Corporation should be able to ring anybody else. Selected, socially-conscious citizens could ring up other citizens from time to time and tell them what was good for them. It may be argued that the bad citizen would be likely to replace the receiver sooner than listen to such advice, but I am told that there would be no technical impossibility in attaching to every receiver a device which would make it impossible to ring off when Lord Snapdragon was speaking.

This surely is the democratic plan for telephoning. In the old days of feudal privilege one man might telephone all the day and another hardly touch the instrument from year to year. That sort of freedom—a freedom based upon inequality—is not freedom as the modern man conceives it. We want liberty, not licence. In a democratic age we can only recognize a right to speak in so far as that right is exercised by a good citizen, and he must be prepared to exercise that right as a general rule through the mouthpiece of his Higher Self, an official of the British Telephoning Corporation.

The British Telephoning Corporation is, after all, a semi-public,

responsible body, operating on a quinquennial grant, whose affairs are debated by Parliament on a Friday afternoon once in every five years (or always have been except in 1951, when the House was unfortunately counted out). It is governed by a company of titled ladies and gentlemen, who have transcended dogma and are also in other ways distinguished for their executive ability. I cannot believe that there is any serious public demand for the continuance of purely anarchical private telephoning as against its investiture in such a body.

On the other side, public opinion has declared itself. Lord Lampost, Lord Snapdragon, Lord Trombone, Dame Edith Mafeking, the Archbishop of Wigan and Mr. Smith have written a joint letter to *The Times*. All but two of these hold, or have at one time held, positions on the British Telephoning Corporation and are therefore able to look at the problem from an impartial point of view, such as is not possible for the casual and merely listening member of the public. The Vice-Chancellors of Bletchley and Blisworth Universities have supported them. At least one of these Vice-Chancellors has on an occasion actually used the telephone himself. Is not that public opinion?

I am anxious to put both sides of the question before you as fairly as possible so that you can think it out quietly in the privacy of your own homes and make up your minds for yourselves. Would you sooner be controlled by Lord Snapdragon or controlled by a chimpanzee? I think you will agree that that is a fair way of putting the issue. If you are not rung up all the time by Lord Snapdragon, there is nothing to stop you being rung up by chimpanzees. I know that there are those who pretend that there is a middle course in which you might be rung up by third parties—or, indeed, even not rung up at all. But I believe that those of you who have thought these things out will see clearly that no such middle course is really a practical possibility.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS





WELL-EARNED REST

The Queen is due at Balmoral to-day

Joe Brummett's Quest

LEFT IN THE LURCH



LITTLE did I ever think that after a lifetime of devotion to the Labour Cause the hour would strike when it came to the parting of the ways between us. Yet a man owes it to his integrity not to bow in the House of Mammon. The Socialist movement has turned off from the broad highway and left me to march forward alone. I must do my duty as I see it, hoping that soon my old comrades, for whom there is no rancour in my heart, will come to a better mentality.

I could scarcely believe my ears when the Executive of the local Labour Party refused to endorse me as a Candidate for the Borough Council. Holding office in no fewer than twenty-three local organizations, M.C. of the Party whist drives for twenty years and hence responsible for raising funds innumerable, looked up to by many and those not all of my way of thinking in political affairs, I was a man who had a claim, if ever a man did on retirement, to a safe seat on the Council, where as *Councillor Brummett* I could continue in a wider field my work for the masses who have placed their trust in me.

Hardly had I received this scurvy treatment when another unbelievable humiliation was my lot. I had suggested to my good friends of the Co-operative Party

that it was time my public work was recognized by my appointment to the Bench, and they kindly forwarded a nomination to the local Labour Party. I had assumed that this would be a formality, a mere channel on the way to the Lord Chancellor. I can still hardly contain my anger and disgust that personal jealousies, undignified feuds and sheer ingratitude should have resulted in first an insulting cross-examination on my fitness to carry out the duties of a J.P. and then in a flat refusal to lay my name before the proper authorities.

Once a fighter on behalf of the People has established a local reputation and a name, newcomers will try to supplant him. They may not have shared in the heat of the day but they claim the spoils of victory. Ever since I was defeated by Ted Unwin for the Chairmanship of the Membership Drive after eight years' service in that capacity, I have known that sooner or later an issue would arise on which my soul would not allow me to remain silent against those who wish to wrest the Labour Party from its ethical purpose and use it as an instrument of personal advancement.

It is in adversity that a man learns who are his true friends. Men who have worked under me in the Party have passed me by while political opponents have crossed the road to shake me by the hand and express their sympathy with the way I have been treated. At the



"... and of course, the food here is simply marvellous ..."

last British Legion Social sub-Committee, Colonel Smith, the Agent of the local Conservative Party, said to me, "Brummett, you and I are on opposite sides of the fence; but we can respect a good man when we see one. You have always put your country above mere party politics."

I have never been one to bow the knee to nobles. Sometimes I rather fancy that my blunt speech has caused surprise to the great ones of the earth. "Colonel Smith," I replied, "I am a blunt man and if you come to me you are going to get it straight from the shoulder. You are damned well right." He took it very well; but then in many ways we look at things in the same light, apart of course from politics where we agree to differ, though not without mutual respect.

Ted Unwin as Candidate for Wakeham Ward makes me laugh. He knows about as much about political matters as the Town Hall clock! I went up to him in the Labour and Trade Union Club and posed him a few queries which enabled me to demonstrate to the bystanders that he did not know that Alderman George Hackett was Divisional Chairman in both 1921 and 1922 and that he was unable to state the changes in the method of electing Delegates from affiliated Unions to the General Committee of the Constituency Party made by Conference in the decade following Southport. Wakeham Ward voters are going to lack political representation for the next three years. For the sake of the electors, I almost feel like having a crack at it myself.

Colonel Smith, whom I encountered at a Red Cross meeting, chatted informally to me about the matter. He believes that there is a place in public life for men of wide experience and strong personality who are unwilling to tow the line of any caucus. He pointed out that by standing as an Independent I should give my own people an opportunity of revealing their opinion of how I have been treated. He told me they were putting up one of their promising lads to get experience of campaigning before they transfer him to one of their safe seats. No doubt I shall be able to give the youngster some tips on the gentle art of public controversy.

Expelled from the Labour Party for opposing an officially sponsored candidate! That is what comes of a man following his principles. The votes I collected show that in future Ted Unwin will not have things all his own way. From a narrow partisan viewpoint it was a pity that the Conservative lad got in owing to the split vote; but at least municipal politics have not been degraded by the elevation of Ted Unwin to the Council. Colonel Smith considers that I was quite right to stand and hopes that I shall be opposing them again—a generous opponent, even if he does happen to be a Tory.

R. G. G. PRICE

"Mrs. Victor Seixas went to Wimbledon to watch her husband play wearing a strapless frock and carrying a jacket and straw basket."—*The Cape Argus*

Worth watching, at that.

KEEP LEFT



NO SMOKING



SILENCE



MIND YOUR HEAD



RETURN OF THE MERRY-BERRIES

MY name is Richard (William) Chandos. You may have met me in any of the several books I have written under the pseudonym of Dornford Yates. I live at Maintenance with my child-of-nature wife, Jenny. We enjoy the still considerable income of the £200,000 which was my share of the Treasure of Count Axel The Red (see *Blind Corner*).

That Friday, July 4th, Mrs. Stonor-Davenant of the village paper shop had delivered *The New Statesman* in mistake for *The Spectator*, and I was reading the Personal columns at the end:—*Univ. stud. (21) sks. vac. job. . . . Young cyclist, male, seeks companion (m) Shakespeare country . . . Girl, 21, seeks similar for hitch-hiking . . . Guitar lessons. Few racs. . . . The Central Board for Conscientious Objectors . . . International Socialist Youth Camp . . . "Forced Labour in the United States" . . . "The Crown and the Cash," Common Sense about the Monarchy . . . For Sale: "New Statesman" 1952 complete. Offers? . . .*

And there, suddenly, my eye lit on the following:

COTE Basque, Pyrenees, Dordogne, 4 seats vacant. Merry group. July 25th, 15 days, £25 incl. PRI 97523 or Box 435.

I handed the paper, with the advertisement marked, to my lady. She read it (Jill, Duchess of Padua, taught her to read, as I have told in *She Fell Among Thieves*). Jenny's sweet pretty brows furrowed. A child looked up at me.

"You think . . . ?" she whispered.

"I am sure, my darling," I answered.

"My G-d!" she breathed, "has it come to this with them?"

I could have kicked myself. In December last we had received from Berry and Co. a Christmas card. I remembered now. It came from London, with an N.W.3 postmark, unsealed and with a halfpenny stamp. It said, simply, "*Love from Berry, Daphne, Boy, Jill and Jonah.*" How could I have been so blind! Berry and Co. in England, in London, in N.W.3, at Christmas time! Gone were the days of White Ladies, Cholmondeley Street, Pau, Carinthia, Portugal, *Gracedieu* and the South for Christmas. That White Ladies and Cholmondeley Street were no longer theirs, I knew very well. That *Gracedieu* (*The House That Berry Built*) had passed into other hands, I had heard from Jonah. But N.W.3! That was too much.

It must mean that Jonah Mansel had gone through his £200,000 of the Axel treasure, that Berry and Daphne had sold the half-million-pound Abbey Plate (*And Berry Came Too*) and were living on the earnings of Boy's books (also written under the pseudonym of Dornford Yates). And Boy and Jill . . . what of them? Had the Padua diamonds (*Adele and Co.*) and the Padua estates at Irikli (*Jonah and Co.*) passed out of the widowed Duchess's keeping?

It was the only possible answer. Berry and Co. were poor! The merry group were riding on the financial rims. And now they were advertising in *The New Statesman* for p.g.s., and one more gaudy holiday in the old haunts.

Jenny was weeping silently.



I rang the bell for Bell.
 "Get out the Rolls," I said.
 "Pack my revolver, my oilskin suit,
 and a length of rope for hanging
 felons in woodland dells. Send the
 heavy luggage by ship to Bordeaux.
 Tell Rowley to head for France
 to-night. Jenny, my darling, do you
 telephone to Forsyth's of Lincoln's
 Inn and tell him to be ready to
 transfer the Collingwood stock-
 holding to Berry's name. Then
 telephone our bankers, instructing
 them to buy all available francs. I
 will telephone to PRI 97523."

But the telephones were dead.
The wires had been cut!

My name is Boy Pleydell. We
 are, together, the five originals of
 Berry and Co. Jill is my wife.
 Daphne is my sister. Berry and
 Jonah I call "Brother" sometimes.
 Actually they are my cousins. See
 the family tree at the beginning of
 all my books.

Three days had gone by.

From the depth of a basketwork
 chair Berry regarded a sampler hung
 askew over the gas-stove in their
 "bed-sit" near the Zoo. Along the
 passage was our "bed-sit," Jill's and
 mine, and along from that Jonah's.

"Home, sweet home," said Berry.
 "But what a charming thought!
 When I was Julius Caesar, the day
 I overcame the Scurvii, little did I
 think I would soon be conquering
 Britain. When I was Hengist and
 Horsa, re-conquering this sceptred
 isle, little did I think . . ."

Daphne and grey-eyed Jill
 clasped each other in a gale of
 merriment.

Jonah's face appeared round the
 door.

"B-b-blue-based baboons!"

yelled Berry. "Is there no privacy?
 Home, sweet home in a lodging
 house in Albert Road, N.W.3!
 When I think . . ."

Ten minutes had gone by.
 I had called a conference.
 Jonah had called for beer.
 Berry had called him a slow-belly.
 Daphne had called us to order.
 Slim finger to lip, Jill had called
 for silence.

"Let us face the facts," I said.
 "Taxation, egalitarianism, two wars,
 the Welfare (*sic*) State, and Berry's
 disastrous evening at the Casino in
 San Sebastian have brought us to
 this. We are not sad. We have
 each other." I reached out a hand
 and drew little Jill to my side.
 "We, Jill and I, with Daphne as
 coadjutrix, went to Coutts' last
 week, and drew out £2. We spent it
 on putting a small advertisement in
 a paper called *The New Statesman*.
 Read it to them, my darling . . ."

The grey-eyed goddess with the
 way of a child read it to them in
 the manner of a child.

"COTE Basque, Pyrenees, Dor-
 dogne, 4 seats vacant. Merry group.
 July 25th, 15 days, £25 incl. PRI
 97523, or Box 435."

"You see what we have
 planned?" I said. "We have taken
 a lien on two six-seater cars, and have
 named them Ping and Pong. We
 shall hire them for fifteen days at a
 knock-down cost of £25. We are five.
*Get four more people in at £25 each,
 and it gives us £75 for expenses!*
 Room for luggage. Room for Tester,
 Nobby and The Knave. Berry shall
 eat *pâté* at Chartres, Daphne shall
 see *Gracedieu* again, Jonah shall fish
 in the Pyrenees, I shall bathe once
 more at Freilles, and Jill's pretty
 eyes will light up the ancient

darknesses of Poitiers. More. We
 shall find the sun. The avenues of
 the long straight roads of France
 shall render our laughter. What's
 Hecuba to us, or we to Hecuba?"

There was a long pause.

"And has the mountebank
 finished?" barked my brother-in-law.
 "Give him an inch and he will take
 an 'ell of a lot more. Why was I
 not informed? How can such a
 holiday proceed without my staff-
 work? Let the press be informed.
 Let the ballad-mongers be briefed.
 When I was Joan of Arc . . ."

Twenty-five days had gone by.
 July was old.

The five of us were driving in
 Ping between Orthez and Peyhorade.
 Pong, with the luggage and four
New Statesman types, was following
 in our dust.

That summer's lease was not
 yet over was most apparent. The
 slow minstrelsy of autumn was
 muted and in the wings. Time,
 taken by the forelock, was greying
 perhaps at the temples, but the
 heraldry of France was ever young.
 Young? you ask, my masters!
 France was young when there were
 Queens in Navarre, and she is young
 to-day, in spite of the unkind things
 I said about her in *As Berry and I
 Were Saying*.

And we? We were young in
Berry and Co., and we can be young
 again to-day. We are a merry group
 still. He who steals our purse steals
 trash.

RICHARD USBORNE

Hustle, Hustle

"On July 30 Mr. Stevenson intends
 to spend five or six days in the country
 . . .—*The Times*



ERRAND OF MERCY

CHARITY, as far as I'm concerned, is one of the deadly sins. And as I ride my old cob along this hot and dusty Devon lane I mutter curses against all those who are generous, especially to the deserving.

For it's hot, and it's going to be hotter. The sun's like a porthole in the sky; a mist grazes over the hill. My ambling horse is already lathered, and the saddle, hard through lack of dubbin, promises an uncomfortable ride. I grab a frond of dusty bracken from the hedge to swat the assiduous flies, and as I do that I dislodge the awkward pack behind me. Then I have to dismount again for the fourth time in half a mile to tighten the obstinate saddle strap. The buckle's rusty, the leather stiff. I pull with my teeth. What in this wide world is there quite so annoying as things that won't give—except people who do so?

It was a hot day like this last year when I had to go on my annual hunt. But there's only one hound at my heel and he's a mongrel with his tongue spilling out from the heat; there's no huntsman in pink, no horn and no scent. For I don't follow a fox. The poor is my quarry, and as I belt it over the countryside I vow that the first impecunious fellow I run to earth will have his moustache sent to the executors

of the late Charles Brogan of Boston.

For it was his untimely bequest of an annual food parcel to the poor and needy of this Devon village which sends me on this exhausting errand. Before the war my task would have been easy. The poor then were conveniently always with us. Now it's quite another matter. And with every mile the C.A.R.E. parcel of tins becomes more intimate with the small of my back.

Naturally, I called on Tim Pengilly first. If he isn't poor he ought to be, I thought. Besides laziness to commend him, he's as honest as they make 'em. Yes, Tim was my first bet.

I can remember 'way back in 1937 when his thatched cottage down by the mill was the very picture of perfect squalor, with the ratted untidy eaves drooping over the uncurtained windows, and his brood of bare-bottomed brats playing beside the road. In those days Tim was fortunate enough to be entirely unemployed, and wholly dependent on the parish. And I'd gathered that in spite of every temptation to seduce him he was still out of work, except for casual rabbit trapping in the winter on his own account.

My hopes rose as I dismounted. I even unstrapped the parcel and carried it to his cottage, which still

needed repairs to its thatch and a coat of paint. Nobody answered my knock. Good Samaritans have privileges. I just walked in. Tim was there, sitting disconsolately in the kitchen. I went straight to the point: "I suppose you're finding it hard to make ends meet?" I bellowed over the noise of the radio.

"Same as we all do."

"Indeed," I said, gratified.

"Well, it's nice to meet a poor man for a change. I've got something here for you."

But before dumping my burden of philanthropy on his table I thought I'd better ask him the routine question. "What's your weekly income, Tim?"

"I only works in the winter; no use trapping now."

"Well, what's it average?"

"Do I have to declare it?" he asks guardedly.

"Poverty's nothing to be ashamed of."

"I was thinking of the tax. It would average about ten pounds, seeing it's twenty pounds in winter."

This was most disappointing—then I remembered his wife and five children. "Still, ten pounds can't go far nowadays with your family," I said, hopefully.

"Too true," he replied. "My wife only brings in seven pounds serving teas down at the guest house, and the three boys bring in no more than twelve pounds a week between them as they're under sixteen and only pick up boys' wages."

"And the two girls?" I asked.

"Farmer Dyson gives them four pounds a week each to help with the dairy."

"Making thirty-seven pounds total a week." I whistled.

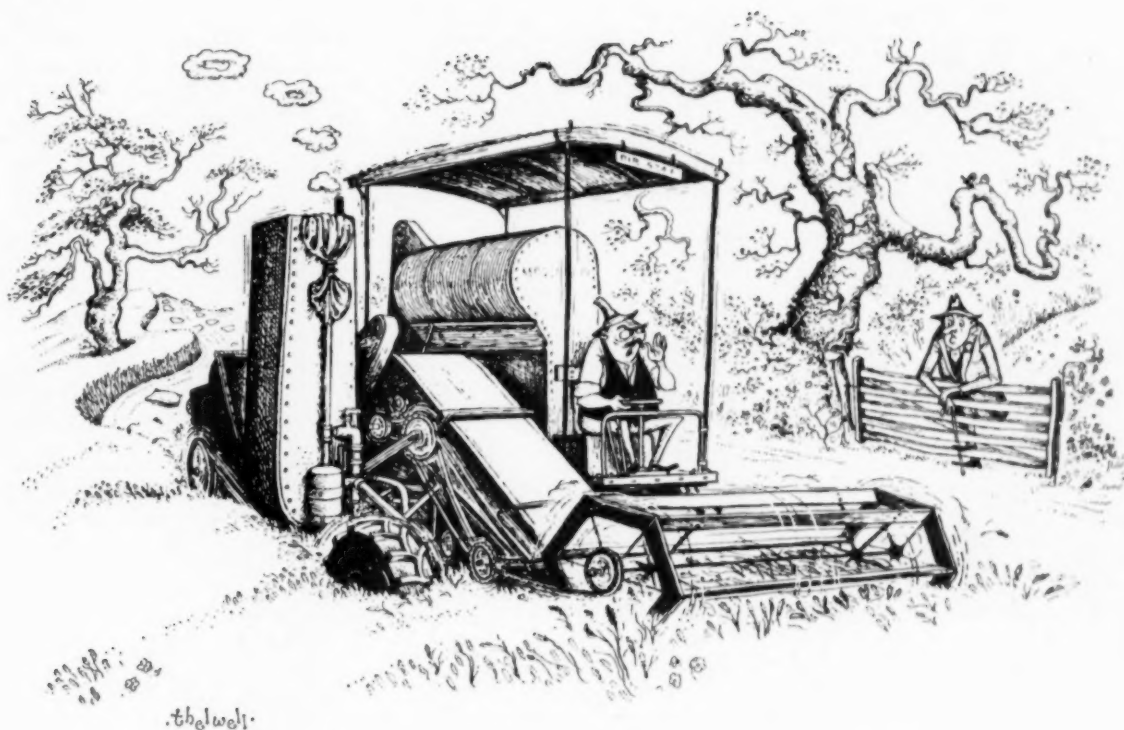
"Plus eight shillings Children's Allowance on the youngest," he said, "which comes in useful to pay the rent."

I strapped the parcel on to the saddle again and rode straight home. My wife unpacked it. "Though the poor are no longer with us," I said, "the needy are."

"And near, too," she added. "And nobody could have intended to waste a tin of *foie gras* on a hungry man, could they?"

RONALD DUNCAN





"I said 'If you want a job doing properly, you've got to do it yourself.'"

BEEN FUN TO HAVE YOU

I'M getting out a radio script for a Muscovite friend of mine, one Pavlo Maltsev, described in a broadcast from Russia the other day as "a well-known Moscow bricklayer." Perhaps to claim him as a friend is a bit presumptuous; I haven't actually met him yet; in fact all I know about him is that the bricklaying programme given on his home ground recently was a smash-hit with Soviet viewers.

All the same, I mean to get a delegation of Russian bricklayers over here in the near future, and Pavlo, being so well-known, is obviously the chap to bring it.

The idea came to me after reading about a reverse operation. A delegation of British Woodworkers has been touring in Pavlo's country, seeing the sights and marvelling. They weren't the only guests of G. Malenkov and associates. The Hungarian Doctors were there, also

the Syrian Journalists, Commonwealth Writers, Bulgarian Peasants, Indian Women, Chinese Sportsmen and many other bodies, all ricocheting enthusiastically between Kiev and Leningrad, Tiflis, Tashkent and Novosibirsk, exclaiming into any chance microphone on the glories of the U.S.S.R.

Some of these visitors were a little fulsome, I thought. The Indian Women over-sentimentalized disgracefully on the contrast between their little ones at home and the laughing and singing Russian kiddies. A leading Commonwealth Writer said of the capital, "I cannot find words to express my delight at this great city"—and could a writer say more? One of the Bulgarian peasants was startled into something little short of eulogy by Moscow's new underground station, and added in a breathless aside that collective farms provided "the only correct way of

leading peasants to a happy life." With all these praises ringing in his ears, the leader of the British Woodworkers, whose name is not clear,* rose to the occasion splendidly when asked for his first impressions of Red Square and nearby beauty-spots. "We are very interested," he said hoarsely, gripping the microphone as if it were a favourite chisel, "in housing construction, particularly in the case of tall buildings." He then, in a spasm of appreciation, handed some paper-workers "three large pictures carved in wood." Similarly, after a free seat at Moscow's open-air theatre, and finding yet another microphone to hand, he announced to listeners in Britain, "The singers in my opinion have lovely voices

* The B.B.C.'s monitoring service, which kindly laid all this information, was somewhat foxed by the announcer's accent.

and a pleasing manner"—and at once, to cover his natural embarrassment at this emotional outburst, handed monogrammed penknives to some furniture-operatives, who came back slickly with a box made of Karelian birch.

Russian delegations abroad are no new thing. Even while those British woodworkers gazed open-mouthed at Lenin's Tomb, Russian radiologists were streaming round Copenhagen, Russian astronomers round Amsterdam, Russian athletes round a Stockholm arena; why not Russian bricklayers round London—ending in a B.B.C. Overseas Service studio in Bush House?

At any rate, that is my plan. And because Comrade Maltsev may not share the woodworker's talent for impromptu panegyric I am, as I said at the beginning, getting out a script. Subject to Sir Ian Jacob's concurrence, I am casting myself for the Joan Gilbert part:

INTERVIEWER. Well, Mr. Maltsev, and what do you think of London?

MR. MALTSEV. It is very clean, quiet, happy, beautiful and big.

INT. Well, that's very nice to hear.

MALT. Your London crowds are so happy as they walk in the rain, joking and standing back to let others mount the buses. Everywhere

they speak with love of your Government and nationalized industries.

INT. Ah, you notice that, Pavlo. I may call you Pavlo?

MALT. A pleasure, Jack. On the underground railway this morning I hear men saying, as they exercise on the straps provided, "This is a fine way to travel." In the hotel also when the waiter brings cheese he remarks, "We owe thanks to our great Food Minister, God Bless Lloyd-George." It is wonderful.

INT. That's grand. But you have had meals elsewhere, I believe.

MALT. To-day we lunch at the refreshment room at Trafalgar.

INT. Waterloo.



MALT. I should say. The lady attendants, so kind and beautiful, with hushed voices and the mustard so fresh. Also in Russia our sausage-rolls are much older.

INT. You surprise me.

MALT. Your taxi-drivers, too, converse most amiably when arriving cheek by jowl in the traffic, saying, "Where do you think you are going?" and such benevolent inquiries. Only to-day, one of them addressed a gentleman on a pedestrian crossing, saying . . .

INT. Thank you very much indeed, Pavlo; it has been a great pleasure and privilege to . . . (etc., etc., FADE on "pleasure").

After that, it will be all over bar presentations. I don't know, of course, what Pavlo and his party will have up their sleeves for me. I'm giving them a box made of Karelian birch, picked up for next to nothing at a railway lost property sale.

J. B. BOOTHROYD

"Moscow's propaganda concerning the United States has been noticeably modified . . . its presentation in the past few months has been less crude, less violent, and argued plausibly—one might say in a more civilized manner . . . no epithets stronger than 'pogrom-makers,' 'Fascists,' 'hypocrites,' and 'hirelings' . . ."—*The Times*

Couldn't it just be soft soap?

ALL I NEED

AUGUST is all I need,
A season almost gone beyond its prime,
Hanging half-way between
Sweet autumn and the nightmare of the spring;
A comfortable time,
When the dull mind watches the heat recede,
And waits, and does not wish for anything
To come, or cry about what could have been—
To rest on this low peak, to hold this placid mean,
August is all I need.

Then where a mellow sea
Falls timelessly upon a shallow shore;
With, if the truth be told,
Nothing in hand but animal content,
But needing nothing more;

There for the standard fortnight let me be
Beset with children seriously bent
On re-refining the accumulated gold
Of other years: there, as if suddenly old,
Let me contrive to be

Re-extraverted, freed
From the quick turning of the eye behind,
The listening for the gate,
The expectation of remembered things:
Give me a vacant mind,
And fun-fairs, and a family to feed,
And a strong net of small unstretchable strings
To be at rest in. For this sublime,
For this mundane and undemanding state,
August is all I need.

P. M. HUBBARD



"C'est fou ce que ces quelques jours en Angleterre ont pu changer notre Jules."

AUGUST HANDICAP

FERTILITY rites apart and *pace* Mr. Eliot, the month of August has a cruelty of its own surpassing April's. This is the holiday month, but accidentally; for it is the wettest of the warmer months, the days are drawing in, Summer's glory—supposing there to have been any—has passed beyond its zenith, and the year is beginning to feel its age.

A gloomily reliable authority informs us that 23 m. (or, more starkly, 23,000,000) people are taking a holiday this year—the large and poignant majority during August. Of this vast number 40 per cent will "stay with relations or friends," despite the fact that "this is not popular with visitors or their hosts." (The absence of italics is my own.) That is to say, 9,200,000 people will by now have engaged in discussions beginning "Well, it looks as if it'll have to be Cousin Maud's again," and 9,200,000 Cousin Mauds or their equivalents will have felt again with Hamlet "a little more than kin and less than kind."

Migration is a sobering phenomenon in human affairs, and only

the professional statistician, scientifically detached and clinically unemotional, can contemplate such figures without a shudder. When the swallows fly south, instinct is coupled with good sense, and the bird-watcher gazing skywards feels none of the bewildered sense of pity which fills the heart of the mass-observer at the railway terminus. The birds are on their way to the African sun, and there is no question of 40 per cent of them putting up in a state of mutual antipathy with bird relations, nor of another 38 per cent staying at boarding nests under the surveillance of thin-beaked apostles of austerity who fill their draughty abodes grudge-graspingly with paying guests. They may not know why they migrate, but neither are they alone in that.

The origin of the holiday habit is obscure and probably two-fold. In the main, like the varnishing of cracked nails and the wearing of imitation jewellery, it comes from the uncomprehending imitation by the many of one of the mysterious habits of the few. The more jaundiced social historians have suggested

that in their heyday the upper classes had to move about from place to place in order to convince themselves they were alive; but the art of being gracefully idle came to them only from many years of precept, practice and example, and they would never have fallen into the error of believing that everybody can enjoy doing nothing. More rationally, diminutive twentieth-century man feels the urge to step for a while away from the treadmill of bread-winning; but negative misery does not mean positive happiness, and the clerk who is sad at his counting machine discovers a deeper sadness among the simpler machines on the pier.

If the ghostly figures of the idly rich are to be blamed for anything in this connection, perhaps it should be for their encouragement of the Watering Place as a venue for these experiments; but can even this be fairly laid at their door? Permeated by the vagaries of the English climate, is there not an especial nostalgia among the marram-grasses and the ribbed sand, and does not the sea which once flowed within our veins call with a voice older than the Sirens?

Whatever the reason, the English holiday resort has come to resemble a kind of pathological laboratory for anatomists of melancholy specializing in nostalgia, a place where, despite all that is done by way of discouragement, people come in their tens of thousands to taste the bitterness of the passing of time. Some even return to the very haunts of their childhood, and one may see them on the beaches trying to play with a coloured ball, or at the close of day with smiles a little set and worn refusing to confess their disillusion, clinging with pathetic obstinacy to the belief that they have only mislaid their happiness, that they will find it tomorrow, or perhaps the next day; or rationalizing their despair in the deterioration of the place, of the sands, of the weather, and of their fellow-revellers ("not the same class of people as we used to get here in the



"'You go on holiday,' I said; 'I'll look after the dog.'"

old days"). It is all very sad and avoidable.

For parents with young children it is in a measure possible to live again the time that is gone; but at the seaside they would do well to recognize that it is their parents' part that they will be living rather than their own. Sand in the shoes will come no longer as an added joy; neither will the chilly tea nor the wind-bleached cake. It falls now to them to speak the lines of dullness on the subject of bathing more than twice a day, and if it is their turn to be the covered-with-sand instead of the coverers they should accept their part and not think too precisely on the symbolism; for children need new sights and sounds and smells upon which to exercise their sharp senses. They may hate the wet morning spent in the promenade shelter; but they will remember its sour smell with an intensity akin to joy. They may be sick in the train, famished at the table, wearied beyond measure by the walk home from the beach, and frustrated by parental incomprehension; but this year's purgatory contains the stuff of which the sunlit past is made, and as such it belongs to the young.

To see a World in a Grain of Sand,
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour.

The first three are the peculiar possessions of childhood; only the last is in some way common to us all, and as far as Eternity is concerned it has always been a matter of how and where you spend it. For myself, I shall be spending the last fortnight of the month at Felixstowe, as usual.

WILLIAM THORNTON

"Rock Rusk was bred at the National Stud and is out of Rusk, who goes back to Pretty Polly. I mention this because Mr. Peter Burrell, manager of the National Stud batch of youngsters which will come up at the Doncaster yearling sales, is a half-brother to Rusk by Big Game."

Scottish Daily Mail

Certainly makes him a leading authority, we should say.

More New Lear:

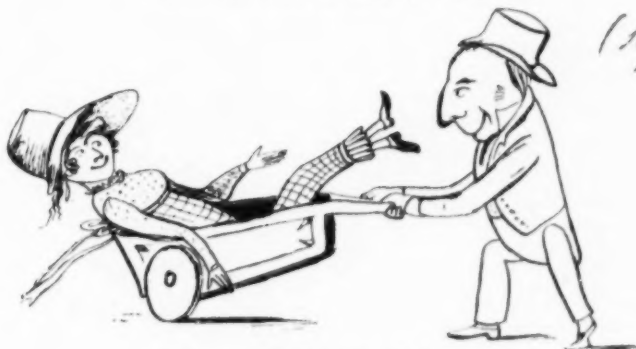
Further extracts from *Teapots and Quails*, a volume of hitherto unpublished works of Lear.



There was an old person of Twickenham,
Who whipped his four horses to quicken 'em;
When they stood on one leg,
He said faintly, "I beg
We may go back directly to Twickenham."



There was an old person of Brussels,
Who lived upon Brandy and Mussels,
When he rushed through the town,
He knocked most people down,
Which distressed all the people of Brussels.



There was an old person of Harrow,
Who bought a mahogany barrow,
For he said to his wife,
"You're the joy of my life!
And I'll wheel you all day in this barrow!"

IN EUSTON'S DARK GROVE—

STATIONS I Have Known, and Trains I Have Met might serve for an autobiography. What memories run to one's aid, of vermouth sipped at St. Lazare in the long hall, a race over the rails at Rome, a lost suitcase at Bremen, the battle of the porters at Nice, frontier days and terminus nights! Or, nearer home, who hasn't sniffed ale outside Temple Meads, or a rough Channel at Victoria?

Euston is inseparable from fog and gloom, the board-room, the moors. There are, I suppose, days when the sun penetrates, when the horse vans swing round a corner under strange lights, though I haven't known them. Fifty yards to the south, where an Erechtheum amazingly cuts the sky, all may be blue weather: cross over, and it's raining. So it was when, the other afternoon, I approached with a half-hour to wait.

You could hardly see into the Grove; and, of course, the station itself—Roman answer to a Greek challenge—you long ago ceased to see. It vanished under creepers of town development. Yet Euston is not inhospitable. It generates its own twilights and then seems to say "Yes, but come in and have a nice warm by the fire." Somewhere there must be muffins, bells to press, leather chairs to sink into. True, it would take more than half an hour to find them.

But there are arcades and bowers, there's the Great Hall to sit in. This has recently been restored to its original spaciousness, so much so that, under the bareness of wall and emptiness of balcony, we may feel a bit lost. We recline, dotted about in threes. We are First and Third together, breathing the same air into which we blow the same taxed tobacco. Only the great Stephenson shares our loftiness; and at his back the branching stairs and the Ionic columns favour him rather than us.

It would be overwhelming if at that moment we didn't notice that we're invited—for a mere shilling—to ascend the stairway and visit an

exhibition. This takes us to the heart of old Euston, to the Shareholders' Meeting Room itself; and a suitably splendid room, also lately reclaimed, it is. Once those keen capitalists thronged the stairs for a glimpse or a shout: now there are no new issues. We tender our bob to a door-keeper wearing a top-hat, and walk in.

London on Wheels is its title and it points a way through the nineteenth century from one numbered section to another, discouraging criss-cross and muddle. As we obediently march, so do events. Mail coach and turnpike are left behind; paddle-boats splash; Trevithick provides, near the present Euston site, a circular railway inside a fence on which for many years families would jaunt; then out of the marshes rise huge viaducts, Lord Mayors spouting their platitudes; tunnels are driven, landowners are bought out, and with flag and bell we're off. Foot-warmers we encounter and pocket candle-holders and bills advertising (in Sheffield) a crown return to the Great Exhibition. The peak-capped porters with tapering trousers look foreign, if no more so than art galleries in the Blackwall Tunnel. Danger threatens not from accidents, it seems, but from robbery and worse. The railway policeman's outfit is frightening; and Frith shows us what may be waiting on the arrival platform. We

are somewhat reassured by the appearance in life-size of a dinner-table laid for two in the restaurant car. It might be, with its crimson velvet curtains and chairs set at an angle, a corner of Gatti's; and one wonders—eyeing future developments—whether the dinner was to match.

It's a pleasant enough exhibition, though with little of Euston itself. But then Euston spreads all about one. Taxis run in and out of the massive Arch, caterpillars of luggage nudge a way through families, there's the schoolboy with his notebook, the lost soldier, the lady devoted to kennels, and Mr. Charles Morgan.

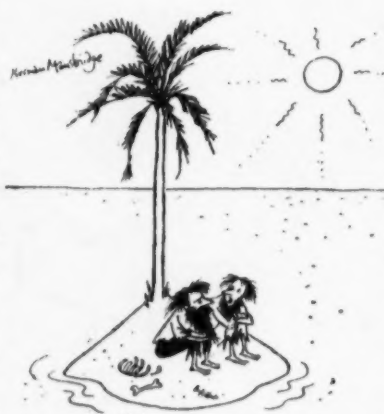
I've just time to meet a few trains. No wonder it's every Englishman's ambition to have driven one; a certain Minister of Transport, it was said, took office with that sole purpose. A goods train, mysteriously loaded, has a whole deserted bay to itself. The fussy local is hardly at all late, yet before it can come to rest its sides have burst open and the passengers hopped out and away. They emerge heavy-eyed and drooping with luggage from one of those long, old, sad trains that have started at dawn and known many a junction and halt.

And here, dead on time, comes the express. What an entrance, neither too quiet nor too eager, proud, keyed to eloquence—Gielgud couldn't do better. This is the freedom that comes of iron discipline; and as, panting, it stands there, one may wonder at the tearaway whistler of nights.

Engines inhabit their own dark world, shuffling and purring, fuming, breathing heavily, roaring across bridges and screaming at tunnels, expostulating over the incline or the weight, bashing, once in a while, ridiculous buffers. A group of admirers quickly gathers round this one. It snorts. There's an answering snort, a wild cry. Locomotives, you pierce to the heart!

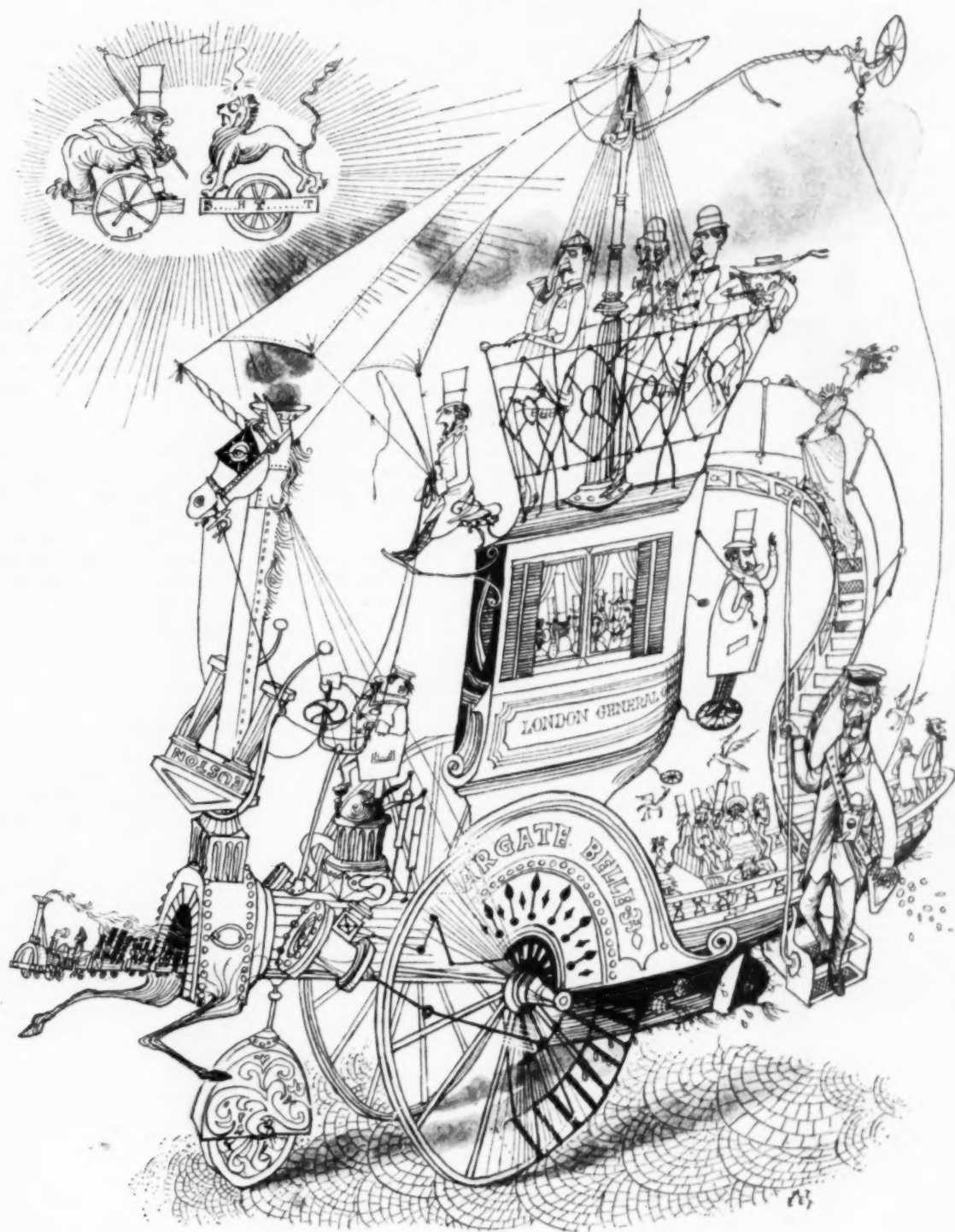
Lord! I must find the platform of the train I'm really meeting.

G. W. STONIER



"Are you for or against sponsored television?"

—A WORLD ON WHEELS



Inside Lewis (and Harris)

A Child's Guide

Q. You have recently visited Lewis and Harris, have you not?

A. Yes and no. I have visited Lewis-and-Harris and Lewis, but not Harris.

Q. Thank you. That is very clear. Am I correct in the assumption that Lewis and Harris are normally inseparable, after the fashion of

Hobbs and Sutcliffe or, for that matter, sausages and mash?

A. Yes, only more so. Hobbs and Sutcliffe, and even sausages and mash, are separate entities, capable of existing apart. Lewis and Harris are so closely integrated that they should probably be followed by a singular verb.

Q. But surely they are separate islands?

A. My dear boy, look at your map and try to confine yourself to questions that can only be answered from personal experience. We do not want to waste time over information readily obtainable from an atlas or *Whitaker's Almanack*.

Q. What, then, were your main impressions of the place?

A. Which place? There are, as I have tried to point out, in a sense two places.

Q. I understood you to say that they were one. However, since you appear to have been in Lewis and not Harris, shall we begin with your impressions of the place you *have* visited?

A. You mean to be sarcastic, I dare say, or even ironical—always a dangerous practice for the ignorant. My impressions of Harris, which I have not visited, are neither negligible nor second-hand. On a clear day the mountains of Harris are visible from most parts of Lewis and leave an unforgettable impression on the mind.

Q. What impression?

A. That I forget. The truth is

that clear days in Lewis do not necessarily coincide with brief visits.

Q. We are rapidly getting a detailed picture of this distant land. Have you anything else to say about the terrain of either Harris or Lewis?

A. Lewis is bare and wet.

Q. So is a baby in its bath. Pray be more exact and particular.

A. Very well. Lewis is treeless, except for Stornoway and an odd bit here and there, and is so full of lochs and lochans that the wonder is it doesn't sink. The roads, which are few and narrow and have wider pieces marked "Passing Place" every two hundred yards or so, are bordered by great heaps of cut peat awaiting collection. Beyond the peat-heaps, green hills with rocky outcrops rise on either side, unless there are lochs or lochans in the foreground, in which case the hills are that much further back. Is there anything else you want to know?

Q. A word about the fauna would round out the picture.

A. That is not, strictly speaking, a *Q.* Still, I am prepared to answer you. Horned sheep roam the hills, mergansers and divers are to be seen on the lochs, and salmon infest the rivers; but it has to be admitted that wild life is not, at first glance, plentiful. One has not, of course, been everywhere on the island.

Q. Has one in fact been *anywhere* on the island?

A. Certainly. I swear it. I have been within a stone's throw of the Bridge Across the Atlantic, which was opened to the public a week or so ago and made a considerable stir in Stornoway. It may even have been mentioned in the *London Times*.



Q. This is red-hot news indeed. Can you describe this remarkable bridge?

A. It is of pre-stressed concrete and connects the island of Bernera with the Isle of Lewis. Bernera lies off the north-west coast of Lewis, and is separated from the mainland by a strip of water which is undeniably part of the Atlantic. Hence the bridge's proud title. It cost, I am told, £2,000,000, but I may have been told wrong.

Q. Was this expenditure of public money wise and right?

A. Well, there are at least five hundred inhabitants of Bernera, and the fear that, the moment the bridge was opened, they would all use it to evacuate themselves to the mainland has not been justified by the event. Two-way traffic continues.

Q. I see. Can you tell me anything about the main industries and occupations of the Outer Hebrides?

A. No. One does not go about asking people what they do for a living. One or two tall chimneys are visible in Stornoway as the boat from Kyle of Lochalsh nears the quay, and there is evidence of an interest in fish. But, by and large, one supposes that the Stornowegians—

Q. One moment. Have you any authority for that word?

A. No. One supposes that the Stornowegians and the people of Lewis in general (who are all called McLeod, by the way) are content just to be where they are and talk Gaelic, without worrying overmuch about a living.

Q. You think it is a good place to be?

A. It is wonderful. There are very few houses and very few cars and no railway, and the newspapers are a day late at least, so you don't have to worry about what is in them. Unutterable peace amid the everlasting hills—

Q. Yes, yes. And the weather?

A. Well. I should describe it, on a brief experience, as variable. There was generally rain in the offing, while I was there.

Q. Always a few threatening McLeods on the hills, would you say?

A. No. The joke would be meaningless in Gaelic.

H. F. ELLIS



BREATHING SPACE

The Korean War, June 25, 1950—July 27, 1953.

*Modern Types***MRS. GREENBELT**

MRS. GREENBELT is a disappointed woman. She is not getting either the respect or the leisure she considers she deserves; and consequently she inveighs bitterly against those people or groups whom she considers responsible for her plight. Sometimes she thinks it the fault of the Labour Party, sometimes of the Jews, sometimes of the Communists, and even occasionally of the more liberal members of her "own" Conservative party. A strong man, she feels, could put things right; but the proper strong man has not yet appeared.

Mrs. Greenbelt is a lady, of course. She may not actually be descended from regular army or navy officers, but she considers herself "officer class"; the Brigadier or the Commander who figures so regularly in her conversation is, if not an uncle or a distant cousin, a relatively near neighbour on whom her political ideas can be fathered. Her relatives in the West Indies or Tanganyika or Hong Kong keep her abreast of developments in the Empire, in which she takes a proprietary interest.

She sometimes thinks, or at least talks, of going out herself if "things" get any worse; she is sure she would love the life, after all, she's such a

keen gardener; but the deepest attraction, though she seldom mentions this, is that in the Colonies she would at last be able to afford sufficient, and properly respectful, servants.

The source of nearly all Mrs. Greenbelt's bitterness and disappointment stems from the absence of servants. She never expected a big household; but when she allowed herself to become attached to the promising young Mr. Greenbelt, a professional or at least "City" man with good prospects, she did expect that he would provide her with a cook, a house-parlourmaid, a nanny when the kiddies came, and a jobbing gardener. A staff of these modest dimensions was, she felt, her birthright; a daughter of the officer class knew how to look after the domestic other ranks; and her skill would be shown by the propriety of the orders she gave. In her leisure, which she envisaged as starting at lunch-time, the merits or the faults of her staff would provide continuous matter for elegant conversation.

During the war she showed courage in the face of danger and resolute endurance under privations she had never foreseen, though she occasionally voiced her dark suspicions that all groups or classes save her own were managing to do well despite the shortages. As her servants were drafted into war industries she "coped" with domestic work she never thought to do, and often with the babies she didn't know how to handle, single-handed except for a daily woman who had to be cozened rather than given orders. Her consolation was that it was only for the duration; after the war everything would be as it had been before, and she would return to her rightful sphere.

Peace did not bring back the

servants; it merely brought back Mr. Greenbelt, who did not seem to realize all that she had been through nor all that she had to put up with. For a time he appeared to demand the same sort of meals and looking after as he had enjoyed before the war; but in a matter of months Mrs. Greenbelt had domesticated him adequately. It was, as she reminded him, really *his* fault that she had to work like a slave from morning till night; she had not expected this when she married him; and her cooking (which preserves her amateur status) often shows her resentment.

Although her life is filled with discontent, she has contempt, rather than conscious jealousy, for those people who lead the life she expected. She can always find something to their discredit, foreign blood or connections with trade or the wrong sort of school. At social gatherings, which tend to be "cocktail" parties with South African sherry and gin-

and-orange rather than meals (so much less work), she can release some of her pent-up venom for her own and her listeners' pleasure. It is one of the few pleasures she has left.

Before her children reached school age she had little idea how to bring them up, and her treatment alternated spasmodically between excessive indulgence and petulant severity. She will, however, make considerable sacrifices to provide them with the education suitable to the class she hopes they will attain. Somehow the boy will be sent as a boarder to a school which is classified as "public"; somehow the girl will be provided with a pony—last claim to leisure and luxury—on which she can amble down the macadamized lanes and which she can display at the annual gymkhanas. When "things" don't get too much for her she is a relatively indulgent mother; but Mr. Greenbelt has a very thin time.

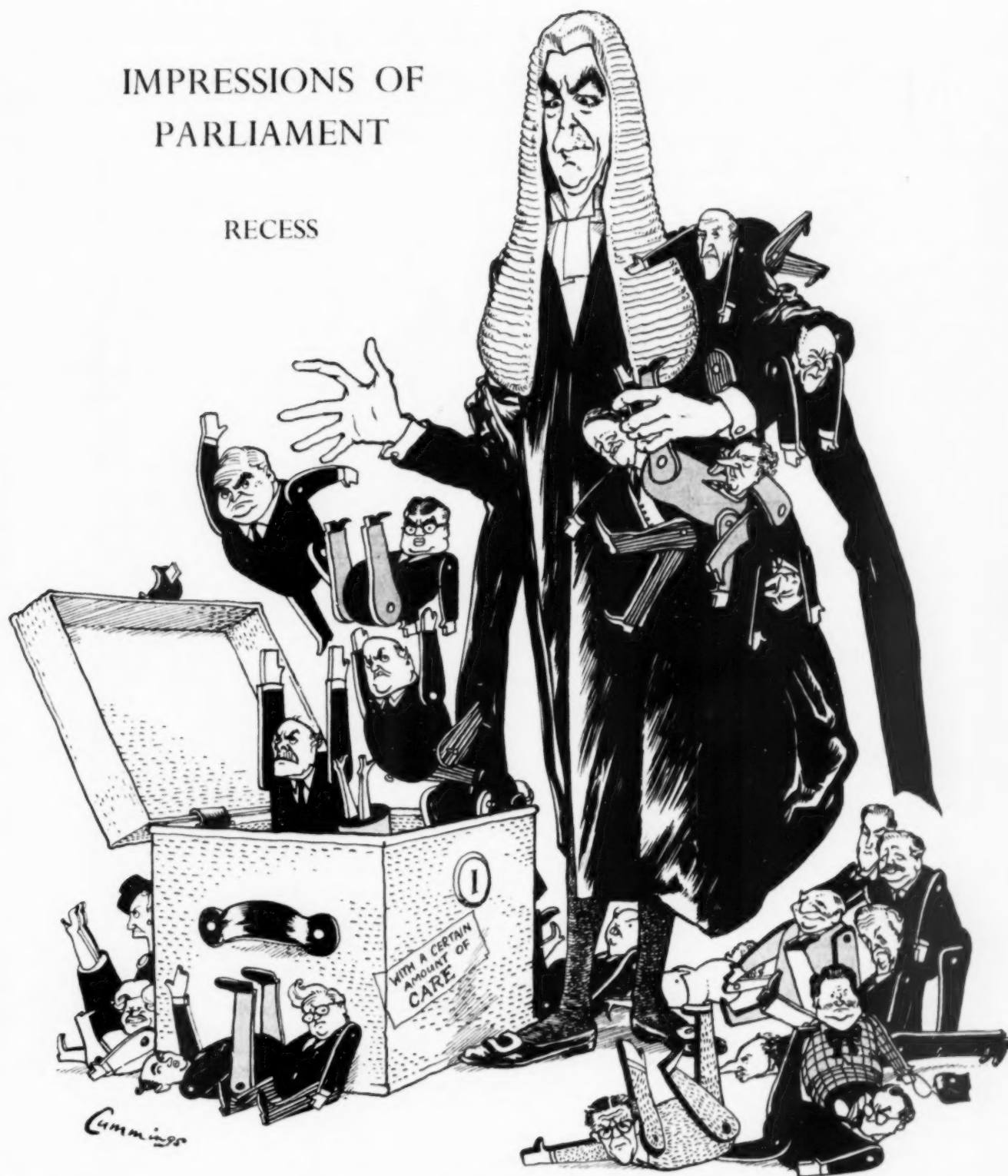
GEOFFREY GORER



"I'll take this one."

IMPRESSIONS OF PARLIAMENT

RECESS



IT NO LONGER HURTS

MODERN science has deprived us of a number of civilized amenities. Not the least of these is the luxury of pain. A study of a recent book by Hans Ebensten, *Pierced Hearts and True Love* (Derek Verschoyle, 12/6), and a talk with Mr. Rich Mingins, of Harlesden, London's leading tattooist, prompts this sad reflection. Tattooing used to hurt—and the fact that it hurt was one of its principal attractions. For the tattooee, if he did not always like pain for pain's sake, liked it for the sake of showing his girls

or his pals how much of it he could stand. "But to-day," says Mr. Mingins, "I never get a client faint."

In the old days every other one fainted. The tattooist would scrape away at the flesh with a thing like a penholder, sharp or otherwise, and, if in some outlandish place he could not get the proper dyes, he would use homely makeshifts. Nowadays he uses an electric needle, and these needles, says Mr. Ebensten, "whirring along with a noise not unlike a dentist's drill, are almost painless after the first puncture and produce little more than a somewhat irritating, slightly itching line running quickly along the arm or chest." Moreover, on the insides of the arm or thighs or on other tender parts "it is not unusual for clients, especially women, to be given a slight local anesthetic."

How degenerate has the British native grown! Mr. Mingins even envisages a soundless needle. Never again may it be said, as Mr. Ebensten records, that a seaman who could stand the pain of having a full-rigged ship tattooed on his chest would automatically make a good topman.

Never again may the much-tattooed be able to boast that a design "hurt like the devil to be done," reliving, as they tell of it, "some of the relish of the pain they willingly bore."

Mr. Ebensten, whose work is

tattooed couple were a Mr. and Mrs. de Burgh. She "bore a reproduction of Leonardo da Vinci's 'The Last Supper' stretching across her whole back with the inscription 'Love one another' beneath it, while on Mr. de

Burgh's back a large scene of the Crucifixion with a banner 'Mount Calvary' extended from shoulder to shoulder." From then onwards tattooing grew popular among the natives of Mayfair. But soon the Common Man took it up, and Lady Randolph Churchill, for the rest of her life, was compelled to hide under a broad



brief, informative, amusing and invitingly illustrated, traces the art of tattooing back to Egyptian mummies. Herodotus, he recalls, tells a story of secret information conveyed through the enemy lines by being tattooed on a messenger's shaven head, over which the hair was then allowed to grow. The Christians forbade tattooing on the ground that the face was God's image and must not be disfigured. The Japanese tried to ban it "on the ground that since all Japanese men and women belonged wholly to the Emperor they might not thus violate imperial property."

In Europe tattooing did not revive, in a popular way, until the eighteen-nineties, when the first tattooed lady, *La Belle Irène*, achieved international renown, tattooed down to the spaces between her toes. "Amongst the butterflies, flowers, angels, suns, eyes and sentimental scenes such as a farewell to a sailor, the lady's body was crossed by bands of inscriptions bearing such messages as 'Nothing without Labour,' 'Never Despair' and 'I live and die for those I love.'" The first

bracelet the tattooed snake which encircled her arm.

In Britain there is generally a Victorian flavour, patriotic or sentimental, about tattooists' designs. But the progressive tattooists of the "younger set," of whom Mr. Mingins is the chief, aim at skin pictures which are not merely painless but up to date: "pictures that should be a pleasure for anyone to look at to-day." "From the pin-up girl on the barrack wall," says Mr. Ebensten, "it is but a short step to the pin-up girl on the thigh." To-day the girls are still buxom, reflecting Victorian appetites. But Mr. Mingins gives to their luscious curves the bolder lines of magazine pin-ups. The young prefer them nude, and in brazen postures, of which tattooists supply an ingenious variety. But often, on reaching years of discretion, they return to the tattooist to have them decently clothed.

There are, of course, movable girls, "placed on the muscles in so cunning a manner that they may be made to wriggle." There is "the tattooed eagle on a back which, by moving the arms up and down, will

flap its giant wings." Religious subjects are chosen by two tattooees out of three. The Crucifixion is popular among criminals; Adam and Eve and the serpent among nudists.

Peers in Coronation year might emulate, with tattooed coronets, the lady with a double-barrelled name who has her family crest tattooed on her thigh. There are, in the words of a famous Hamburg tattooist, "designs for everything which a manly body should express: Politics, Erotics, Athletics, Religion, Aesthetics." To which he adds the warning: "Do NOT GIVE your body into the hands of bodgers." A Japanese tattooist gives another prudent warning: "I do not business if fuddled."

What is it all about? Mr. Ebensten says sex. Mr. Mingins says indignantly not. He prefers to call it bravado. Meanwhile, with the emergence of short-sleeved shirts and naked forearms, the summer season for tattooing is on.

KINROSS

GARDENING NOTES

I SOMETIMES think that never blows so red
The Rose as by some weather-beaten shed
Where it has never heard
A single word
Of the advice of Mr. Streeter (Fred).

Though few would quarrel with Voltaire's assertion
That cultivating gardens is a must,
Some view their mowers with acute aversion,
Their potting-sheds with ill-concealed disgust.
What might be called the gardening-be-blowed school
Accomplishes not only labour-saving
But labour's absolute elimination—
Obliterates the soil with crazy paving,
Lays here and there an artificial toadstool,
And strews with guileless indiscrimination
The verse-plaque (poker-lettering and chrome),
The plaster rabbit and the waggish gnome.

Others adhere to Cowper's point of view,
"Who loves a garden loves a greenhouse too,"
And claim that when on Horticulture bent
The expert's time is profitably spent
(If he has any left from bonfire-stoking,
De-slugging of *Paeonia sinensis*
And fielding balls from all the neighbour's fences)
Beneath a good glass roof, serenely smoking.

D. A. WILKINSON



"I HAVE been travelling,"
 Said the scribe Ching Fo,
 "In the Western Lands.
 Much have I seen,
 And much was enlightening.
 The customs
 Of the Western Peoples
 Are as various
 As flowers or beetles.
 In one island,
 Whose name has passed from me,
 They drink *Tchai*
 From sunrise
 Till the time of sleeping;
 In other lands
 There is no *Tchai*.
 But one custom
 Is common to all the lands:
 In hours of leisure
 They play with balls.
 There are great balls,
 Great as the Moon,
 And small balls
 The size of stars,
 Strong balls, which are a danger,
 And delicate balls
 That dart like birds
 And leap away
 At a touch.
 There are balls so heavy
 That they cannot be lifted
 And are rolled along the lawn
 By old men, at sundown.
 There are balls of ivory
 In many colours
 Which with long slender wands,
 Longer than a man,
 They push across a green table
 In a bright light, after the feast.
 These balls, from time to time,
 Like mountain animals,
 Vanish into holes,
 And the men laugh gaily.
 There are great balls of oxhide,
 Full of air,
 As light as feathers,
 Uncertain as butterflies;
 These are directed, miraculously,
 With the feet and head.
 There is a great ball,
 Like the egg of the Mountain Eagle,
 Which is sometimes carried in the
 hands
 And sometimes moved with the
 feet.
 There are little white balls,
 Made from the juices of a tree,

From the Chinese



Which with long implements
 Of wood and iron
 They urge across the country,
 Over hill and dale,
 For many miles,
 For the space of many hours.
 Even in the water
 They play with balls,
 For to swim, it seems,
 Is not sufficient exertion.
 They play with balls on the ice:
 In secret courts
 They strike them against the
 walls
 And over nets.
 They strike the balls with sticks,
 With gloved hands,
 With wide weapons
 Composed of cat-gut.
 They throw them into small nets
 Hung over their heads:
 They thrust them, carefully,
 Into holes in the ground.
 There are laws, it is said,
 Which govern the games:
 But these, to the traveller,
 Are incomprehensible.
 Those who are skilled
 In the management of balls
 Win praise and glory:
 They are more than the Rulers.
 The people crowd to see them
 As if they were dancing-girls.
 Some are rewarded:
 Some perform without fee.
 But all are equal
 In public veneration.
 Strangest of all,
 Is the island I have mentioned
 Where is a pastime
 For two-and-twenty men.
 A ball painted red
 (For it is a danger to the person)

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Is cunningly thrown
 At three sticks in the ground.
 In front of the sticks
 Stands a man in armour
 Carrying a weapon
 Cut from the willow tree.
 It is his purpose
 To protect the sticks,
 Defend his person,
 And strike the ball away.
 Whenever he strikes it,
 Meanly, along the ground,
 The people praise him,
 Clapping their hands:
 But if, mightily, gloriously,
 He smites it high in the air
 Like a bird soaring,
 Stirring the soul,
 Shame is his portion
 And he smites no more.
 At any moment,"
 Said the scribe Ching Fo,
 "Nine of the players
 Are not playing.
 The game continues for many days,
 But after five days
 It may not be known
 Who has won.
 It is a great wonder
 That this particular pastime
 Was devised in the island
 Which I have mentioned:
 For it requires sunshine
 And dry ground.
 Many centuries have passed, they
 say,
 Since such conditions
 Were enjoyed in the island
 For five following days.
 Yet the people
 Sleep in the streets
 And suffer agonies
 To obtain a place.
 Returning to my own land
 Of repose, of reflection,
 I consider from afar
 The Western Peoples,
 Restless, divided,
 Pursuing phantoms,
 Running without cease
 From conference to conference,
 But seldom able
 To say what was decided.
 I give high thanks
 To my honourable ancestors,
 Who never, I believe,
 Invented a ball-game." A. P. H.

Footnotes to Wisden

BEDSER bowled, Lindwall swiped and the stumps were spreadeagled (a lovely euphonious word). Immediately the thirty-odd thousand people on the Headingley ground clapped and yelled their approval of Bedser's feat in equalling Clarrie Grimmett's record of 216 wickets in Test cricket. Hutton walked up the wicket and shook the Surrey idol by the hand. Bedser grinned. My neighbour turned to me and said "He needs four more to beat Tate's record of thirty-eight wickets in an England *v.* Australia rubber, and fifteen to equal Barnes's forty-nine against South Africa in 1913-14."

I nodded in verification of his figures.

All the same I was surprised: I am always surprised to find cricket enthusiasts who share my mania for the statistics and numerology of the game. Once, in the middle of the winter of 1951 and in casual conversation, I mentioned that of six hundred and twenty-five Members of Parliament no fewer than three hundred had been educated at public schools. "Six hundred and twenty-five!" said my interlocutor. "Why, four more and they'd have beaten A. E. J. Collins's score of 628 not out for Clarke's House *v.* North Town at Clifton College in 1899."

"I've always wondered about that match," I said. "The innings was spread over five afternoons, so I doubt whether it ought to count as the highest score ever made in cricket. You're not a Clifton man by any chance?"

"Good heavens, no," he said. "I'm Yorkshire."

We were still talking cricket when the bar closed.

To the true cricket fan the figures 365 do not suggest the number of days in a year but Clem Hill's score against New South Wales at Adelaide in 1901: 555 does not mean a certain cigarette but the record first-wicket partnership of Holmes (P.) and Sutcliffe (H.) for Yorkshire against Essex at Leyton in 1932: 12 does not suggest inches, pence, months or apostles but the lowest

score ever made in a county match—Northants *v.* Gloucestershire in 1907.

Harry X was a county cricketer of distinction, a man of intense concentration, stern defence and an undoubted flair for figures. When he retired from the first-class arena, with 22,572 runs and a top score of 206 to his credit, he played occasionally in minor matches, and on one occasion it was my good fortune to appear among the opposition. Harry X batted extremely well and reached fifty: then with his score at 67 he walked down the wicket, made no sort of stroke at the ball and was easily stumped.

The explanation—given us by their umpire—was startling. In his career Harry had made almost every figure between 0 and 206, and he was most anxious to complete the arithmetic sequence. His 67 against us left him with only 38, 91 and 188 to

get. A few weeks later I learned that he had been run out for 38, but whether he ever managed his 91 and 188 I do not know.

Few B.B.C. commentators seem to have any real knowledge of the finer points of statistics. The other day one of them told us "Well, it looks as though Alec Bedser has no fresh fields to conquer now. He's broken practically every record in the book." Every record! Has Bedser ever taken all ten wickets in an innings? No. Nine wickets? He has taken 8 for 18—for Surrey against Notts—but has he ever taken 8 for 19? Has he ever knocked all three stumps out of the ground at Chelmsford? And has he ever equalled my performance—for Wrixby Green against Woolworth's II—of bowling three men in one innings with no-balls? I doubt it.

Alec Bedser is certainly a great bowler, but he's got a long, long way to go yet.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



"All move round one, pass it on."

CRITICISM

BOOKING OFFICE

Dr. Munthe

The Story of Axel Munthe. Gustav Munthe and Gudrun Uexküll. John Murray, 18/-

THE *Story of San Michele* was first published in this country in 1929. By now it has sold nearly a million copies and is said to be still selling. Its readers at the present day are mostly quiescent, but when the book first appeared they were vociferous enough in its praises. Their extraordinary range in those days could not fail to strike any one interested in human behaviour. Elderly maiden ladies in cathedral closes; hard-drinking American heiresses married to dissolute French noblemen; Kipling; Paul Bourget; Mussolini. All these found it enchanting. But the highbrows would have none of it; and indeed, in literary circles, *The Story of San Michele* became almost a byword for cheap and pretentious writing.

What sort of a man was its author, Axel Munthe (1857-1949), who produced this best-seller in his seventies? The present biography (translated from the Swedish by Malcolm Munthe, one of his two sons, and from the German by Lord Sudley) does not get us much further. His cousin, Dr. Gustav Munthe, contributes an adequate account of the family, and says something of Munthe's early days and subsequent career. The remaining two-thirds of the book, by Baroness Uexküll, consists of rather random memoirs of its subject. Baroness Uexküll already finds it necessary almost to apologize for Munthe's extremely pro-British and anti-German attitude in two wars; though naturally in this country we feel his approach more sympathetic than that of some of his countrymen, who fell over backwards in efforts to assure the Kaiser and Hitler of their neutrality.

Munthe came of an ancient and

decidedly distinguished family, having its origin in Flanders, though Scandinavian since the end of the sixteenth century. His grandfather was a distinguished cavalry officer with a large family, among whom Munthe's father, the youngest son, went through life with a background of bad health, puritanism, and lack of money, alleviated by interest in



chemistry and music. Munthe himself started his career as a sick man. It was due to a visit to the Riviera to overcome a weakness in his chest that he decided to study medicine in France.

It appears that he was marked down at an early age for a brilliant medical career; but as soon as his grown-up life begins the reader enters a realm of fantasy, created by *San Michele*, which Munthe's present biographers fail to illuminate at all clearly. He seems to have possessed hypnotic gifts which were used with great effect both directly and indirectly. When the cholera epidemic struck Naples in 1884 he made his way to Italy from Lapland, where he was spending a holiday, and worked with the medical relief services there with the greatest courage.

Gradually his fame grew as a

doctor and an eccentric. He moved in the highest circles, and it was his boast that there was not a royal palace in Europe in which he had not spent a night. But like other men of giant egotism, the ordinary rewards of material success were not enough for him. They must be emphasized by a kind of outward denial. Decorations were showered on him; he lost them or gave them away. With a post at court, he made difficulties about wearing court uniform. When he accompanied a royal train he would not wait for the royal party to alight, but would immediately jump to the platform and stride off with his two dogs. He declared that he liked the company only of the poor and lowly, and no doubt on Capri he spent some of his time with the peasants, as he had done while working in the Paris hospitals. But, all the same, it was with the great that his life was finally associated, ending as a guest in the King of Sweden's palace.

Loving the sun, yet almost blind; highly courageous, yet always in deadly fear of death; hating ceremonial, yet a voluntary courtier; is it to be wondered that he complained of unhappiness? Did his own protests against convention become almost a form of obsequiousness? After all, everyone knows the success that a professional "rough diamond" or "plain speaker" can achieve in far less exalted circles. If Munthe had really wanted a quiet life (even at an agreeable high social level) he could perfectly well have enjoyed one without so much exhibitionism. Yet there can be no doubt that he was a remarkable man, and, whatever its failings (and the third-rateness of much of its tone and pseudo-philosophy can scarcely be exaggerated), that *The Story of San Michele* is, in its way, a remarkable book. For example, the anecdote of the hunch-backed *Leichenbegleiter* and the two coffins that became confused is admirably told by any standard.

Curzio Malaparte, another Capri resident (also a student of life not suffering from too much diffidence), supplies an interesting vignette in *Kaputt*. "When Axel Munthe is in a good mood, he amuses himself with improvising mischievous jokes at the expense of his friends. And that was perhaps his first good day after some months of raging loneliness. He had gone through a dismal autumn, a prey to his black whims, his irritable melancholy, shut up day after day in his tower, stripped bare and like an old bone gnawed by the sharp teeth of the southwest wind that blows from Ischia, and by the north wind that carries the acrid smell of the Vesuvian sulphur as far as Capri . . . stiff, lean, wooden, like an old tree trunk, worn and withered by the sun, by the frost and the storms, and with a happy smile hidden amid the hair of his small beard like that of an aged faun . . ."

ANTHONY POWELL

Valley of the Shadow

A Frost on My Frolic. Gwyn Thomas Gollancz, 12/6

The Lesser Infortune. Rayner Heppenstall. Cape, 12/6

MR. GWYN THOMAS's fertility of comic invention, especially verbal invention, has got him labelled as a funny man. He can certainly be very funny indeed and his rich prose is packed with new jokes; but his wildest extravagances never desert reality. His eccentricities are reacting against the bitter bleakness of a small industrial town in a Welsh valley. They revel in oddities, play wonderful games with words, have shapes and mannerisms as grotesquely individual as if they had been drawn by Phiz or Hogarth; but they joke and watch small things as men do who have lived under the shadow of disaster, economic, medical, spiritual—and have survived.

The decorations cluster round the experiences of a prefect in a grim local school during the war. A new dining-hall is opened: there is fire-watching: the boys visit the cinema: there is a wonderful harvest camp. The odd violence with which the book ends casts back a sombre glow on

earlier incidents that at the time seemed farcical and inconsequent.

The laughter is genuine enough; but the theme of the novel is that of *Juno and the Paycock*: "Take away these hearts of stone and give us hearts of flesh." Mr. Thomas is the Welsh Sean O'Casey, though his English reviewers prefer to take him as the Welsh Wodehouse or Runyon. He is the greatest proletarian novelist since Lawrence, and by comparison with his the prim, grey proletarian novels of the thirties seem etiolated and collaborationist.

Mr. Rayner Heppenstall's account of his Army service in Northern Ireland and England and his treatment in an Army psychiatric hospital is written as fiction, but real people appear, sometimes under their own names, sometimes under pseudonyms. This slovenly lack of decision about what kind of book it is meant to be has even more serious results. The key piece of information that would make sense of the whole is omitted.

A straightforward record of war service is usually interesting, even if only mildly; but to the author this is obviously a book about a desperate and successful attempt to retain sanity. Unfortunately some reticence or inhibition prevents Mr. Heppenstall from describing what threatened it, and, if one did not know him by repute, one would take this to be a self-pitying account of a comparatively cushy war. It is not that; but the evidence is in his other work, not here.

R. G. G. PRICE

Tattersalls—Two Hundred Years of Sporting History. Vincent Orchard. Hutchinson, 30/-

This book wastes what might have been a fascinating tale, too much of the author's energies being devoted to showing how respectable this firm of auctioneers has been ever since Richard Tattersall founded the family fortune in the 1760s. Names of famous men and horses are brought in quite unconnected with the main story, and the art of auctioneering is, unfortunately, hardly touched on.

A hint, however, is thrown out when describing the late Somerville

Tattersall's demeanour in the rostrum. His habit was to concentrate on two bidders, balancing one against the other, with all the time a third bidder in some other section of the ring up his sleeve. Ignoring the signals of the third man, he would suddenly bring him in to reanimate the market when the time was ripe. *Tattersalls* belongs to the class of book that can best be described as being "handsomely produced with numerous illustrations."

G. T.

Florence Desmond. Herself. Harrap, 16/-

Theatrical autobiographies are often so frothy with stage gossip that they can only interest a small circle of mutual darlings. Miss Desmond's is much more catholic. She has had a full experience, and writes about it with a gusto which should appeal outside the theatre. Starting life over her father's bootshop in Islington, she was touring in *The Babes in the Wood* by ten, was on the halls by fifteen, and after a hard time in the provinces became one of Mr. Cochran's Young Ladies when she was twenty. Another ten years saw her an international star, famous for her brilliant imitations of stage and screen celebrities.

Her first marriage, ended by Tom Campbell Black's tragic accident, brought flying into her life, as her second has brought farming. A practical passion for Guernseys is rare in this genre of reminiscence. E.N.S.A. tours, Hollywood and many friendships in and out of the theatre are all described in a book as attractively human as its author. E. O. D. K.

The Household Cavalry at War. Roden Orde. Gale and Polden, 63/-

"Tell me," said an Italian *principessa* to the R.S.M. of a Foot Guards battalion billeted in her *palazzo*, "each day at this time I hear a great stamping and shouting—what is that?" "That's the Discipline, ma'am," said the R.S.M.

The Foot Guards went through the war immutable within the rigid carapace of the Discipline; but the Household Cavalry, equally gallant, seemed always to move in a deceptive atmosphere of casualness. This laconic



exterior masking an extreme thoroughness of performance characterizes also Major Roden Orde's history of the 2nd Household Cavalry Regiment—a combined Blues-Life Guards armoured car regiment which served in Normandy, the Netherlands and Germany under 8 Corps, 30 Corps and the Guards Armoured Division.

The author writes in an easy, readable style—never failing to recall any occasion when a member of the regiment did something unutterably ludicrous—an account which, on closer examination, turns out to be a masterpiece of painstaking and perceptive handling of detail. The illustrations (mostly drawings by Eric Meade-King), maps, appendices and general production match the first-class quality of the narrative.

B. A. Y.

Nothing for Tears. Lali Horstmann. With an Introduction by Harold Nicolson. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 15/-

Mrs. Horstmann's poignant account of her corner of Germany during transition from Nazi to Soviet rule demands our admiration. She writes, with "no weakness, no contempt, dispraise or blame," of her own and her husband's resolutely cultured existence under barbaric rule. Freddy Horstmann was a retired diplomat, a connoisseur and collector; even while he awaited the arrival of Russian tanks he could design a new folly for his park, "a small tea-house in Chinese style," in which his meals would be served on Dresden porcelain "of around 1730, with Chinese motifs painted in mauve, red and gold."

Lali Horstmann might need to defend herself from the oncoming troops, but she determined to do so with a Fabergé paper-knife. Hunger, looting, brutality, even the death of her husband did not kill her appreciation of art and of permanent standards; and her humorous, perceptive, understanding comment on the Berlin of 1945 reveals at moments an enlightened Germany and at all times a woman of rare integrity.

J. R.

The Social Insects. O. W. Richards. Macdonald, 15/-

Rather than cat or dog, we might try keeping a bee or an ant colony. Dr. Richards throws out the suggestion, while admitting that these strange pets are not for everyone. They are, in fact, so fascinating to read about that, with books like *The Social Insects* to keep us informed, we've no need of looking round. Who hasn't been stung by a wasp? How many know that that same sting may serve to paralyze a caterpillar on which will be laid an egg? Or that the grasshopper carries its ear in its foreleg?

Insect societies, among wasps, bees, ants, and termites, are Dr. Richards's province; admirable are his

accounts of the bee dance, of the fabulous ant armies of South America. Pride of place goes, of course, to the ant, and the latest news here is that much has yet to be learnt. So now's your chance. Set up a formicary, and spell out the ants' language as Von Frisch did the bees!

G. W. S.



AT THE PLAY

Le Heros et le Soldat
(LYRIC THEATRE,

HAMMERSMITH)

Tobias and the Angel (ARTS)

LISTENING to Shaw in French is like looking at a familiar room through somebody else's glasses that nearly fit your astigmatism, but not quite. All the proportions appear slightly different, and things which have ceased from long use to mean very much stand out as unexpectedly important. The experience was new to me, and rather fascinating. Certainly Shaw seems to go into French, the most elastic language of ideas, more easily than one can imagine him slipping into the ponderous prefabrications of German. Admirably translated by M. AUGUSTIN and Mlle. HENRIETTE HAMON, *Le Heros et le Soldat* (*Arms and the Man*) presented no great difficulties to the Belgian National Theatre, which has been visiting London for a brief but welcome season.

At the same time the production of M. RAYMOND GEROME gave us a

somewhat altered play, for whereas we in this country are content with the scintillations of Shaw's mind, M. GEROME made all his stage business as physically amusing as possible. This was particularly evident in the *Bluntschli*, who became a character of farce in the hands of M. ANDRÉ GEVREY, an accomplished light comedian armed with all the tricks of knockabout. In the bedroom, for instance, *Bluntschli* wasn't merely very tired but so extravagantly exhausted that his fatigue offered a music-hall turn in itself. M. GEVREY's abysmal yawns conveying their infection to an audience whose jaws were soon working in unison like so many pit pumps. As I remember this part of his performance I am still yawning. But however entertaining, it was a distortion which left *Bluntschli* a nice funny little officer who could never possibly grow into the figure his author intended for the last act.

In spite of this fundamental difference, and some uneven acting, it was still an interesting evening, in which the three women came noticeably closest to our idea of Shavian comedy. Mlle. YVETTE ETIENNE's *Raina*, Mlle. MAXANE's *Catherine* and Mlle. CATHERINE FALLY's *Louka* might all have found a blessing at Ayot St. Lawrence. M. MAURICE AUZAT got only the fussy part of *Petkoff's* character, and M. GEROME's *Sergius* seemed to have strayed in, darkly smiling, from musical comedy. But that impression may have owed something to the



[*Le Heros et le Soldat*

Major Sergius Saranoff—M. RAYMOND GEROME *Bluntschli*—M. ANDRÉ GEVREY
Raina Petkoff—Mlle. YVETTE ETIENNE

excellent costumes of M. SERGE CREUZ, which for once really smacked of Middle Europe. His ingeniously simple sets were equally striking.

Another step in my education was *Tobias and the Angel*, BRIDIE's oddly charming account of the financial walking-tour in the Apocrypha, conducted by the timid son of Tobit under the more than competent supervision of the Archangel Raphael. Miss JUDITH FURSE's production at the Arts was inclined to be slow, but good enough to convince me that this blend of fact and fairy-tale, of the real and the audaciously anachronistic, was the kind of material best suited to the genius of BRIDIE, never quite tamed by the theatre. You may say it is a thin play which dodges the dramatic rules. I don't care. I liked it. Even at his most straggling there was a richness in BRIDIE which lifts him above the great run of careful playwrights. Except Shaw, nobody else in our time could have made an archangel use the word "Pickwickian" and get away with it.

The two performances to note here were Miss MAXINE AUDLEY's extremely intelligent and sensitive *Sara*, an authentic Persian thoroughbred, and Mr. ANTHONY NICHOLLS' *Raphael*. If Mr. NICHOLLS' splendid voice and fine presence melted me a little less than I felt they should, it was only because his manner happened to remind me of a housemaster who darkened my youth by his ironclad conviction that he was always right.

Recommended

The dolmums continuing, try *Dear Charles* (New), *The Seven Year Itch* (Aldwych), and *High Spirits* (Hippodrome), all three powerful tonics for the season. ERIC KEOWNS

AT THE PICTURES



Lili—*Call Me Madam*

ONE can recognize the commercial sentimentality and calculated, artificial charm in *Lili* (Director: CHARLES WALTERS) and still find plenty in it to enjoy. Obviously LESLIE CARON, hitherto known chiefly as a dancer with Gene Kelly (and she is given very little dancing to do here) has the priceless gift of sincerity, or what in acting it is conventional to call sincerity. In *Lili* it is contrived that she shall display sincerity, "warmth," pathos, gentleness, wide-eyed lost-lamb innocence and other universally appealing qualities very nearly all the time, and the contrivance, to anyone sensitive to such things, is unmistakable. And yet—

The story, when one considers it, reeks of the box-office. Wish-fulfillment for the men: the dear little



Lili—LESLIE CARON

(Lili)

hero-worshipping girl, absolutely dependent and submissive, with never a back-answer (Zsa Zsa GABOR is there to typify by contrast the kind of girl who is difficult) . . . For the women, the appeal to motherly feeling—for at first Lili does not seem anywhere near glamorous enough to represent competition or arouse jealousy. Besides, the girl is only sixteen . . .

It is never easy to explain how a work that may be so cynically dissected may still have been done in a way that makes it enjoyable without shame by a reasonable intelligence. Perhaps the chief reason here is, after all, the charm of Mlle. CARON; perhaps this, after all, really is sincerity.

The fable is about a homeless girl who finds a job with a travelling fair (another box-office touch) in Páree (another). She is taken on by the show's puppet-master after an unrehearsed success with a casual audience that hears her in earnest conversation with his puppets; thereafter she converses with them at every performance, and the puppeteer (MEL FERRER), ex-dancer embittered by leg injury, falls in love with her. For a considerable period—till it is time for the climax, in fact—she fails to realize this, or that she loves him; but a dream sequence with the magnified puppets makes it clear to her as she is sadly walking away. Then the rush back and the ecstatic embrace.

It's nicely done, and good to look at. It struck me that the Technicolor pictures of Páree gain something from the diffusion of the wide screen: the influence of *Moulin Rouge* and Lautrec is noticeable, but an unexpected reminiscence I had not noticed in such things before is of Sickert.

All very well to be lukewarm about film versions of successful musical plays; the fact remains that such a film as *Call Me Madam* (Director: WALTER LANG) represents a quite enormous aggregation of miscellaneous talent and skill, and it's only fair to recognize it.

To people who "hate musicals"—and too many make such pronouncements as if they had some more absolute value than a similar one about hating (say) spinach—this will seem irrelevant. But most people of sensibility, even the comparatively small number committed to some serious concern for the arts, will find it hard to resist the fun, the colour, the good comedy playing, the bright tunes, the superlative dancing and the bounding vitality of this heap of nonsense, which flags only at moments when they pretend there is a plot to be taken seriously. ETHEL MERMAN holds it together (vitality, thy name is Merman); if I mention any other plum in the cake it had better be the brilliant acrobatic dancing of DONALD O'CONNOR.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

There still seems nothing much to pick out among the London shows except the long-established *Adorable Creatures* (10/6/53), *The Beggar's Opera* (17/6/53) and *Moulin Rouge* (25/3/53). *Les Sept Péchés Capitaux* (24/12/52) is having another London run.

Top release is *The Captain's Paradise* (24/6/53), a bright comedy, and the next most interesting is also British: *The Square Ring* (15/7/53), boxing story with much good small-part acting. RICHARD MALLETT

"THESE doctors," said Phil May in 1903, "are difficult. I'm to stay in bed for my lungs and take outdoor exercise for my liver." It was one of his last witticisms, for he died in that year—on August 5—at the age of thirty-nine; but fifty years after he lives vividly as ever in his drawings.

The Nineties: he was essentially of them in appearance, character and style. No trace of the great Victorian of art remains in the clean-shaven visage with wide mouth and cheerful grin, the unconventional hair-crop, the horsily checked clothes. He pursued with the new fervour the pleasures of the town—Romano's and Rules for him were what the Moulin Rouge was for Toulouse-Lautrec. He had, of the 1890s, their prodigality, their excesses: scattering largesse among cabmen and flower-sellers (and others less deserving), paying half-a-sovereign for his paper to the newsboy because "the little beggar looked as though he could do with it." The keg of whisky in his studio at Melina Place, St. John's Wood, was constantly emptying and filling: the staples of his diet were champagne and cigars.

All this was part of a typical Bohemianism. Making not perhaps the £100 a day with which he was once credited but still a large income, he lived from hand to mouth; kept money in odd places—sovereigns in his socks—in need of more would "cash" a swiftly drawn outline for the £5 permanently on tap at the offices of *The Sketch*. Fond of his wife, Lillie, he was kept from home by his Bohemian temper until the small hours.

In spirit, his drawings reflect a metropolitan jollity extending "from Petticoat Lane to the Lane of the Park" to use the title of the superb

ESSENCE OF THE NINETIES

Phil May (1864-1903)

series in the *Punch* Almanack of 1898. His "guttersnipes," wizened and rickety (it was one of his ambitions to illustrate Arthur Morrison's *Child of the Jago*), were as carefree as his swells of the Trocadero bar. In technique his



Reproduced from *Punch*, March 19, 1902

A BIG ORDER

Stout Party (to waitress). "PUT ME ON A PANCAKE PLEASE!"

drawings were a revelation, even a revolution.

He and the decade of frolic "arrived" suddenly together (he was twenty-six in 1890); though already the young man from Leeds had had much experience and a taste of success. Stage-struck in his penniless early days, he had produced amusing costume designs, able theatrical portraits. His three-years contract

with the *Sydney Bulletin* (1885-1888) made him a comic draughtsman of some note, in a style variously influenced by Linley Sambourne, Caran d'Ache and W. G. Baxter (of *Ally Sloper* fame): but it was not until he returned from Australia to London (he joined *Punch* in 1893) that he became dazzlingly personal.

The pen line had a new value now that the process block exactly reproduced it. Phil May used a pen with the wit of the new age—the art of being brief. As fastidiously as Whistler (who so much admired him) he omitted the non-essential and selected the necessary line. As luxuriously as Beardsley he played on the contrast of absolute black and white (distinct from the pervading grey of Victorian wood engraving). The costers at 'Appy 'Ampstead in *Phil May's Sketch Book*, full of character, are also masterpieces of economical outline. The evening dress of his National Sporting Club is an opulent depth of darkness.

His brevity extended to words. Classic are the shocked monosyllables of his gentleman refusing non-alcoholic refreshment—"Tea! Me!!" His picture of the lion tamer who took refuge in the cage from the anger of his wife is captioned "You coward": on second thoughts the artist considered the "you" should have been cut.

The psalmist's span of life would, it is strange to think, have brought him as near to us as 1934: strange, because in one way he seems inseparable from his age. The world of Phil May disappeared before 1914, the gaiety of the nineteen-twenties was not the gaiety he knew; yet his art is not merely "period"—its wit of line merits him the title of first of modern comic draughtsmen. WILLIAM GAUNT



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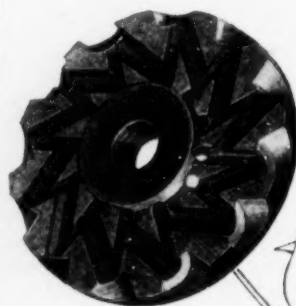


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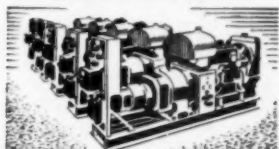
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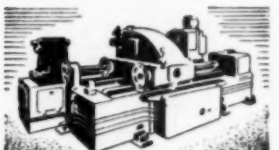
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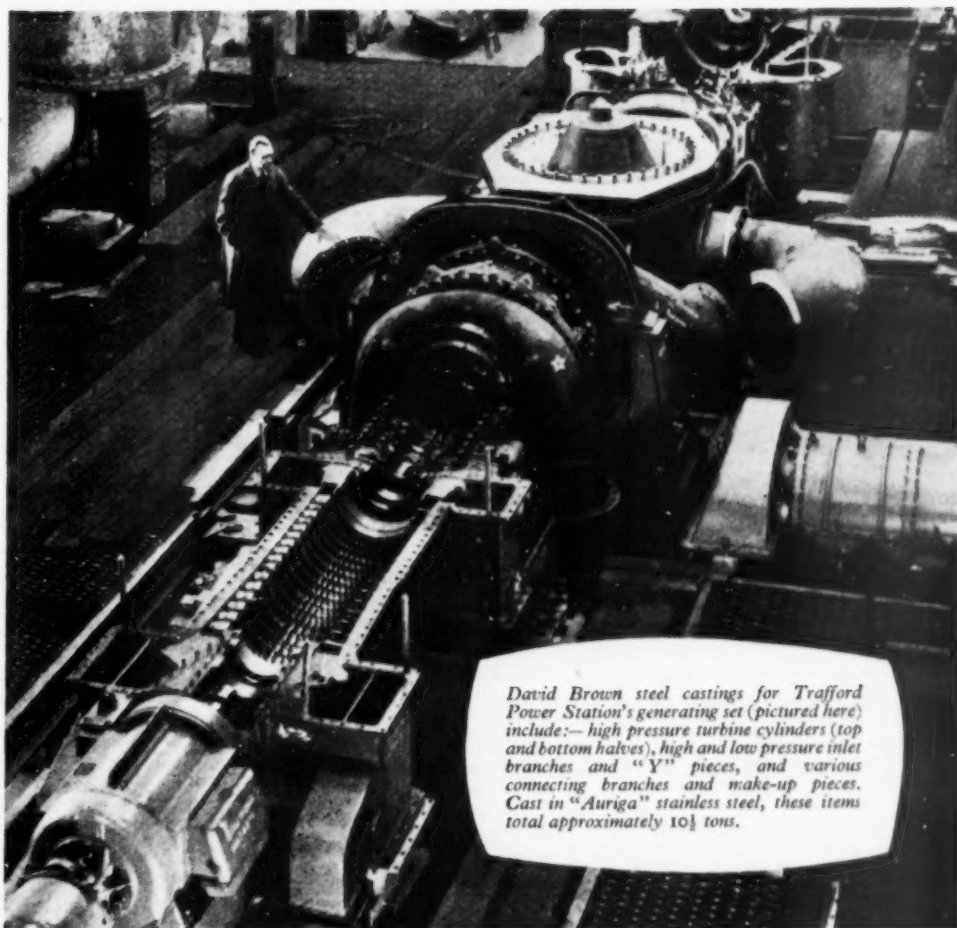
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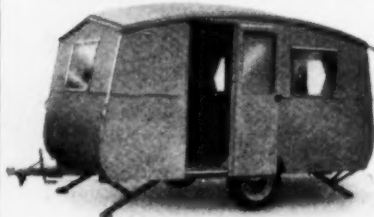
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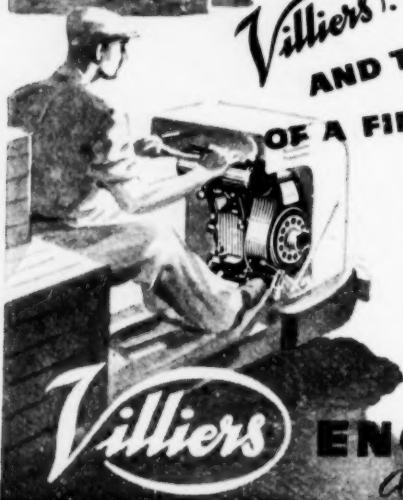
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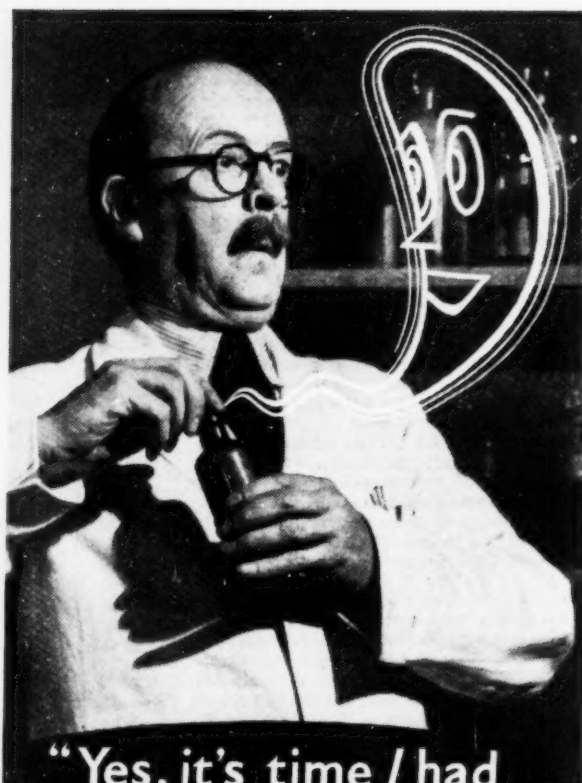
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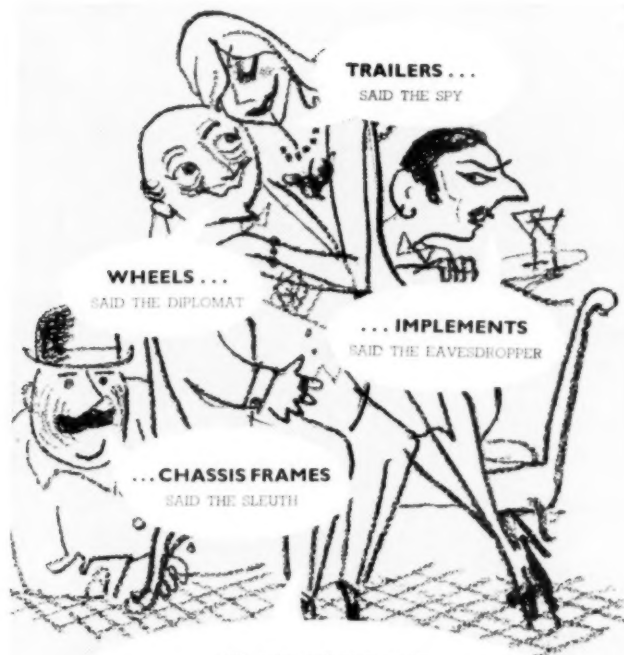
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